

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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SECSTATE WASHDC 4018

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0560

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (SIMON, WILLIAM E), PINR, TC MUHAMMAD

SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC INFO: SHAIKH SOROOR BIN AL MAHAYAN

REF: STATE 049377

FOLLOWING IS AVAILABLE BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON SHAIKH SOROOR AS REQUESTED REFTEL: SHAIKH SOROOR BIN MUHAMMAD AL NAHAYAN - SHAIKH SOROOR IS THE YOUNGEST ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE "BENI MUHAMMAD," THE SONS OF SHAIKH MUHAMMAD, COUSIN OF SHAIKH ZAYED. SOROOR AND HIS FOUR ELDER BROTHERS HOLD POSITIONS OF PROMINENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT, WITH SHAIKH TAHNOUN (PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY AND GOVERNOR OF AL-AIN PROVINCE) PERHAPS THE CLOSEST IN SOROOR IN INFLUENCE. THE FAMILY HOLDS PARTICULARLY PROMINENT POSITION BECAUSE UNDER THE RULE OF PRIMOGENITOR THEY HAVE A STRONG CLAIM TO THE POSITION AS HEAD OF THE RULING FAMILY IN ABU DHABI. THEIR GRANDFATHER, ELDEST SON OF SHAIKH ZAYED BIN KHALIFA, WHO RULED 1855-1909, DECLINED TO ASSUME THE POSITION OF RULER ON HIS FATHER'S DEATH, RESULTING IN A SHIFT IN THE LINE OF SUCCESSION TO THE CADET BRANCH.

SHAIKH SOROOR, STILL IN HIS TWENTIES, IS A BACHELOR AND IS NOTED FOR ENJOYING A GOOD PARTY ON OCCASION. AS STATED ABU DHABI 553, HOWEVER, HE IS HARD WORKING AND, PARTICULARLY IN COMPARISON TO OTHER MEMBERS OF RULING FAMILY, BOTH CAPABLE AND HONEST. HOWEVER, HIS FORMAL EDUCATION IS RUDIMENTARY AND HE IS STILL VERY DEPENDENT ON MORE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE TO HELP HIM IN THE VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES SHAIKH ZAYED HAS

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GIVEN HIM. BECAUSE ZAYED LIKES HIM AND KNOWS HE IS WILLING

TO WORK, HE IS OVERBURDENED BY THE RESPONSIBILITIES PLACED UPON HIM. HIS DUTIES RANGE FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COURT TO HEAD OF ABU DHABI WATER AND ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT TO THE HEAD OF ADFAED. HE IS MEMBER OF THE INVESTMENT CORPORATION BOARD, EXERCISES BROAD SUPERVISION OVER SHAIKH ZAYED'S PERSONAL FINANCES AND CURRENTLY HEADS THE COMMITTEE DRAFTING A PERMANENT CONSTITUTION FOR THE UAE. DURING A TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE SPRING OF 1975, IN ADDITION TO PURSUING A NUMBER OF PROJECT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, SOROOR HAD DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON ON THE SUBJECT OF REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WHICH HAVE NOW RESULTED IN THE WATER AUGMENTATION AND TELEPHONE SYSTEM PROJECTS AND GIVE PROMISE OF FURTHER EFFORTS IN THE WAKE OF SECRETARY SIMON'S VISIT AND THAT OF BERGER SURVEY TEAM.

SOROOR'S ENGLISH IS LIMITED, BUT, TYPICAL OF HIS INDUSTRIOUS NATURE, HE HAS RECENTLY ASKED THE EMBASSY'S HELP IN FINDING A LANGUAGE TUTOR SO THAT HE MIGHT OVERCOME THIS DEFICIENCY.
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